



FINAL

**Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
March 23, 2006 Meeting
Hearing and Speech Agency, Baltimore, MD**

Attendance:

Members: Alexis Allenback (DLLR), Will Johnson (MDHR), Pamela Jenkins-Dobson (MCHR), George Kosovich, Linda Webb (DHCD), Ethelette Ennis, Howard Leonard, Paul Farrell (MSDE), Julie Moyer (MDOT), John Gaver (MDOT guest), Ben Dubin, Vanessa Antrum (DHMH) and James Tucker (MSD)-**Quorum**

Absent: Lindsay Dunn, Diane Edge, and Joshua Friedman

Visitors: Anni Hollenbeck, Kerry Quinn, Paula Schauer, Susan Russell, Diane Perkins, Olivia Hill, Gaylene Beard, Jennifer Whitcomb, Grace Steingieser, Laurie Yaffe, Michelle Schaefer, Brenda Kelly Frey, Mary Gladstone and William Suggs

Staff: Yvonne Dunkle and Denise Perdue

Interpreters: Carol Stevens, Steve Frank and Lucy Sugiyama from CIRS

CART: Carmen Cromartie from Com Access, LLC

Meeting convened at 2:10 pm

Welcome and Introductions: Chairman Benjamin Dubin called the meeting to order with an apology for the confusion and delay in getting the December meeting Minutes to members. Howard Leonard proffered a housekeeping item: a seating chart and list of participants might help the CART provider better identify speakers. Members should also be aware that transcription doesn't always capture who is speaking. It would be best if everyone identifies himself or herself first before speaking.

ACTION ITEM: Ben requests that Advisory Council minutes be published and sent to all members within one month of each Advisory Council meeting.

Review and approval of the Minutes from December 1, 2005

Additions: none offered

Corrections: none offered

Moved to accept: Linda Webb

Seconded: Will Johnson

Vote: Unanimous

Chairperson's Report – Ben Dubin

Ben Dubin: It should be emphasized that Joshua Friedman's email, recently sent to members regarding his intent to take legal action against Maryland theatre operators, is not an ODHH sanctioned action. In hindsight, it would have been preferable to work with the Attorney General's office to resolve this issue before Joshua and his group felt it necessary to file a lawsuit. An organization called In Sight has worked hard with Maryland theatres to provide

caption services. New Jersey settled a law suite that actually limited access to caption movies by specifying certain number of theatres and certain days and times to show captioned movies.

Had the opportunity to review the Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation website to verify certain businesses, which ODDH has in the past supported or promoted, to see if they have a valid charter. For example, the Maryland Disabilities Forum (MDF) is not a chartered 501c3 organization in Maryland but is operating as a non-profit without the legal documentation to do so. He asks Council members to help Yvonne Dunkle decide how to better work with organizations and businesses if they are not a valid organization in the state.

Last month, he attended a Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS)/Early Hearing Detection and Identification (EHDI) conference in Washington DC that focused on children. A lot is happening both nationally and in Maryland to develop protocols that identify children before they leave the hospital. Later, during this meeting the Maryland State Steering Committee for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students (MSSCDHHS) will be presenting. Last week Ben Dubin, Yvonne Dunkle and Denise Perdue attended MSSCDHHS's Statewide Genetics conference at McDaniel College. Connexin 26 is newest issue regarding identifying genetic causes of deafness.

Also attended the January and April meetings of the Task Force to Study Visual Smoke and Evacuation Alarms. The Task Force is grappling with many complex issues. Another issue is Driver's Education that at this meeting the Council will discuss further. The Rehabilitation Act's Section 504 and the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) require community colleges to provide accommodations. Accommodations in private driving schools are still an issue.

Regarding ODDH's website, he is pleased with the work that Yvonne Dunkle and Denise Perdue have done to incorporate Council members' feedback. It will be a comprehensive resource once it's up and running.

Director's Report – Yvonne Dunkle

Yvonne Dunkle: A change in the Director's Report format will help Council members clearly identify what staff has been doing to date. Denise Perdue was introduced and asked to say a few words about her experience in the last 7 weeks.

Driver's Education- John Gaver and Bruce Robinson (representing Larry Westcott). MDOT/MVA developed a list of driver education schools that verified their intent to hire interpreters if requested to do so and posted them on the MVA website. Although not many community colleges teach driver education there are four that do and will also provide interpreter services when requested. It is possible that SB 456, which permits colleges to borrow cars from dealerships, may encourage others to follow suite. This bill, if passed, could remedy the expense associated with buying and insuring a fleet of vehicles needed for driving schools. Linda Webb asked if high school age students are permitted to take classes at community colleges. Yes, since high schools no longer offer driver's education. MDOT was excited to learn about Assistive Listening Devices that could help hard of hearing students in a class and a software course that was developed using sign language. MVA is aggressively working with private schools however; they do not see a huge demand of deaf kids wanting driver's education. Ben countered

that statistics will show that there should be a high demand. But regardless of the requests to date the schools need to be ready. Linda Webb asked Jamie Tucker if MSD students have to complete driver's education. Mr. Tucker responded that for years MSD had their own driver's education program until their teacher retired. When that happened, MSD students turned to the community for classes, which proved to be a disaster. Mr. Tucker suggested that someone needs to pay for training for new teaches who can sign or for interpreters.

Bruce Robinson: Frederick Community College (FCC) is offering driver's education classes within the next month for people who are interested in becoming instructors. The MVA will post FCC 's instructor course on their website and will work with the local community to advertise deaf or ASL fluent students.

Howard Leonard: Summarized significant meetings and discussions held to date between council members, ODHH staff and MDOT/MVA staff and added that a driver's license greatly affects Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) clients looking for and getting jobs. One DORS counselor reported that one private driving school had agreed to pay for interpreters if she (the counselor) could get five paying students. Unfortunately, the counselor was unable to get 5 eligible students at the same time. Made two recommendations to MVA: 1) attached or include a fee to all licensing transactions to be pooled for interpreting services, and/or 2) work toward creating a tax credit to be offered to driving schools who pay for interpreting services.

DISCUSSION: Related to the MVA's COMAR regulations and its ADA authority, undue burden and demand for or lack of demand of deaf people requesting accommodations with driving schools.

John Gaver: Noted that deaf people were not raising a concern in Annapolis at the Legislature when the original driver education law was introduced. **ACTION ITEM:** Recommend that a sub-committee be established to look at driver education laws and propose changes for the next legislative session.

Ethelette Ennis: Suggested that a small fee (\$.50 or \$1.00) on license applications to create a pool of money to be used to pay for interpreter services similar to the fee collected from telephone users to pay for Maryland Relay.

Bruce Robinson: MVA is still not receiving formal complaints from deaf and hard of hearing people but they are receiving phone calls from advocates and the MVA is addressing each one on a case-by-case basis.

Yvonne Dunkle: Concluded her Director's report by announcing and commending MSDE's decision to offer ASL classes as two foreign language credits. MSDE continues its effort to determine qualifications for teachers of ASL. ODHH will continue to monitor the process and it should be known that the deaf and hard of hearing community is supportive.

State Agency Members' Report and Updates

Linda Webb: Acronyms, such as CART (Communication Aided (assisted) Real-time Transcription (translation)), are not easily understood and should be spelled out.

Will Johnson: Reported that there are no updates from Department of Human Resources (DHR) since the last meeting.

Agency reports were suspended to make time for the special presentation from the Maryland State Steering Committee for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students panel.

SPECIAL GUEST PRESENTATION by the Maryland State Steering Committee for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students (MSSCDHHS). Panel Members Presenting:
Diane Perkins, Olivia Hill, Susan Russell, Gaylene Beard and Paula Schauer

Diane Perkins, Chair: MSSCDHHS represents 23 county school systems and Baltimore City. MSSCDHHS looks forward to working with ODDH on education issues to help the Council understand the issues and current trends that affect deaf and hard of hearing students especially since the Council lists “education” as one of its pillars in their State Plan. MSSCDHHS meets regularly to share information and provide training. Its purpose is for educational professionals and support services personnel to hone skills, share information and provide advocacy for their deaf and hard of hearing students. Its most recent success was the annual statewide conference on Genetics that attracted more than 170 people, which included community members and health professionals. MSSCDHHS also works with other groups on policies that affect deaf and hard of hearing students. An example of that is the Maryland Quality Assurance Screening (MQAS).

Some statistics of who is served include 400 deaf and hard of hearing students in Montgomery County, 100 in Anne Arundel County, 230 in Baltimore County and 54 in Charles County.

Gaylene Beard, Anne Arundel County: Reviewed the laws that lead the decision making process for deaf and hard of hearing services. Section 504 (Rehab Act) - each child that does not need special education services has a “504 plan.” The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires students with disabilities to make progress in the general education environment with assistance, if necessary, in an included environment to the maximum extent possible. A more recent law that has a huge impact on all children with disabilities is No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which was passed for ALL students to achieve a certain level of proficiency in core subjects.

In Anne Arundel County deaf and hard of hearing students is less than 1% of total student population. Sixty-four percent (64%) are considered hard of hearing and 10% are considered Deaf. Twenty-six percent (26%) have been identified with multiple disabilities (i.e., autism, emotional disorders or learning disabilities). The national incidence of deaf people with multiple disabilities is 30%. Ninety percent (90%) of services are provided through the itinerant model to students because 70% of Anne Arundel County’s students attend their neighborhood schools. The school system also uses a co-teaching or small group approach when a teacher of deaf and hard of hearing visit the neighborhood school 1-2 times a week. There is one cluster site remaining for pre-school – 5th grade. Seventy-five percent (75%) of students in regular classes also have additional supports. There are 7 students who use interpreters and 19 students who commute daily to MSD by bus.

Susan Russell, Montgomery County: Presented a wide array of services available to the approximately 400 deaf and hard of hearing students (from birth to 21) who are in regular education classrooms, contained classes or cluster centers. There are also itinerant teachers who travel around to provide services. The county provides related services such as, Audiology, Speech and Language, loaner hearing aids, classroom assistants, sign and oral interpreters, cochlear implant rehabilitation, counseling and also behavior supports, and transcribers. There are also volunteers and Parent Educators in the schools as well. They also employ some 40 plus

interpreters to provide oral and sign language interpretation in addition to Cued Speech translators who use specific hand motions to represent the audio/phonetic sound visually.

Montgomery County has some unique services or programs such as a Total Communication program and uses a three-tiered level approach in elementary school because the curriculum is so rigorous. Approximately 1/3 of the students in the county attend a “cluster” school while the remaining 2/3 attend their neighborhood school or a special school. Students in Montgomery County are accustomed to the interpreters or FM systems. Because of the heightened awareness of deaf and hard of hearing student body high school students are able to take captioning classes that teach the technique of captioning. There is also a speech-to-text pilot program and the county employs deaf teachers and deaf parent educators. Broken hearing aids can be repaired locally on sight. About 25% of their deaf population is from families that originate from foreign countries. Thirty-six (36) families send their children to MSD.

Diane Perkins: In Baltimore County of the 230 deaf and hard of hearing students only about 140 students will have an IEP. One student may have 5 service providers: teacher, interpreter, audiology, SLP, Itinerant teacher, Psychology and Social Worker and another may use only an FM system. When a child receives an assistive technology they learn to maintain it themselves. Baltimore County is seeing more and more students with cochlear implants.

Olivia Hill: Charles County, St Mary’s and Calvert Co. Have small numbers but the same representation, although many of their students present with various syndromes. They have a regional school for elementary students only.

Paula Schauer reported for Kathy Jones, Mid-Shore Consortium, who was unable to attend: The Mid-Shore Consortium is comprised of five county school systems: Kent, Queen Anne’s, Talbot, Caroline and Dorchester counties on the Eastern Shore. They report having 28 deaf and hard of hearing students. Six students have implants and 6 students use interpreters.

Questions asked of the panelist:

- How does each county report census and statistics to MSDE? Through Part IV on the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- Are students with a “504 plan” counted as Special Education students? No, those are separate numbers, as well as, MSDE accepts only 1 disability code as a student’s primary disability. If hearing loss is considered a secondary disability that child is not counted as deaf or hard of hearing. Accurately counting students has been a long-standing problem.
- A few years ago there were approximately 150 educational interpreters around the state. Are those numbers still the same-more or less? We don’t know. The IEP does not identify interpreting services.
- What established the MSCCDHH? It was generated by MSDE to advise them. There is a Vision Committee and OT/PT advisory committee as well.

John Gaver: suggested that the executive order that established the Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing be modified to include the MCCDHHS as a member.

- What is an FM system? Paula Schauer demonstrated the current state of the art digital technology, which is now part of a hearing aid.

- Are the captioning classes in Montgomery County available to the public for caption services? At this point they are not ready to work professionally. But they are learning a skill that perhaps will lead to a career.
- Is an IEP open to employers or is that confidential? The IEP is a confidential document but many students have a student portfolio to use as a tool into the employment world.

Jamie Tucker: was asked to report on MSD and their student make-up. MSD is expanding its programming to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing students with cochlear implants. Dr. Ruth Howell has 50 children with implants, some who are very young who receive both signing and oral education in classrooms. MSD students are diverse in their educational goals, some who are college bound and some who are vocationally ready. The same services that are utilized in county schools are also used at MSD. Our middle name is “school”!

Final Thoughts:

The panelist concluded their presentation with several final issues of concern.

Susan Russell would like to see deaf and hard of hearing kids with emotional disabilities remain in state for services and not to go to states like FL, MA, and IL. Emotionally disturbed kids are the “forgotten” kids in our system and the dual diagnosis makes it hard to place. This subject has been talked about for many years in Maryland.

Emerging technologies are of great benefit to the education process but finding people trained in Cued Speech, Cprint®, TypeWell® and CART is becoming difficult. It has also become increasingly difficult to find qualified educational interpreters.

Paula Schauer reported that two years ago there was a study on classroom acoustics, which lead to the schools purchasing sound fields for educational classrooms. Some counties like Anne Arundel have done that for many years. Now there is an effort to get the findings into the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards for new construction.

New Business:

A. Change Meeting Format –Ben Dubin and Yvonne Dunkle

Action Item: Linda Webb suggested that Ben Dubin and Yvonne Dunkle meet to identify subcommittees and advise council members of the new sub-committees at the next meeting. In addition to the previous mentioned Driver’s Education sub-committee, members suggested several topics to focus on: Education and the MQAS, deaf-blind and low function or underserved. Agencies to include as a sub-committee member are MDOD, DHMH and DDA. Or, another thought is to work with MSSCDHHS to set up a working group to identify the number of deaf and hard of hearing high school students.

Action Item: Ben Dubin will arrange a meeting of ODDH staff, himself and any other Council members who wish to meet between now and the next meeting to discuss this in depth and present their discussion at the Council’s next meeting.

B. Future meeting dates for 2006 – Ben Dubin

June 1, 2006, time: 2-6 pm, location HASA

September 21, 2006, time and location TBA

December 14, 2006, time and location TBA

Open Forum

Four people addressed/testified before the Advisory Council:

Michele Schaefer: First, addressing the driver's education issue - she took driver's education at Loch Raven High School and had an interpreter for classroom instruction but cannot recall how it was arranged or who paid for the service. The instructor seemed comfortable with deaf students. He also used gestures during the road/practice portion of the class. Her father sat in the backseat during the "on the road" portion of the training. She made the request that the money and a solution be found comparing it to accommodations made for people in wheelchairs. The driving school she attended was a private school and with the help of her parents she will find and submit the name of the school to ODHH.

Second-she was recently hired as a benefits specialist with Benefits Info Source/Independence Now. They provide consulting services related to SSI, SSDI and the PASS program for free to consumers. She would also like to see the tax exemption, the same one that blind people claim, be created for deaf people. There are more deaf people than blind people but deaf people don't have the same lobby that blind people have.

Mary Gladstone (Deaf Shalom Zone, Office Administrator) and **William Suggs:** Ms. Gladstone began by explaining the mission of the Deaf Shalom Zone, which is to meet the unmet needs of the deaf and deaf-blind community. Currently they work with about 40 deaf-blind individuals.

Mr. Suggs reported that he recently returned from the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) in Long Island NY, where he studied computers and learned orientation and mobility (OM). As part of his training he had an internship working at a credit union. For his job he used a Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) for magnification and learned Braille. After finishing his training in February 2005, he returned to Maryland to get a job but has been looking for more than one year. Now he is worried that his computer skills are deteriorating. He emphasized he simply wants a job, not pity. At home he uses a computer with Zoom Text that enlarges the print large enough to see and read email. Seattle, Washington has plenty of work for deaf-blind people but he wants to stay here in his home state and work. He has been in the Quest program at the Work-Force Technology Center, WTC, but feels it's not doing anything toward getting a job. The state paid for his training but now he feels it's a waste.

Howard Leonard: The Division of Rehabilitation Services DORS has a department for service to the deaf and hard of hearing and has recently created the Office of Blindness and Vision Services (OBVS). Individuals who are deaf-blind do not always have access to the same level of services, due to their unique communication needs. For now, though, deaf-blind individuals who primarily communicate through some form of sign language are assigned to counselors that work

with deaf people. DORS has recently hired two new Rehabilitation Specialist for the Baltimore City region. He told Mr. Suggs that he would try to arrange a meeting with his new counselor in an effort to address his concerns about employment.

Mary Gladstone: The reason they attended today's meeting was to suggest the state of Maryland create a new position, a Deaf-Blind specialist, who is specially trained and skilled in sign language and tactile sign language and knowledgably about deaf-blind issues.

Howard Leonard: Urged Ms. Gladstone to write a letter to DORS to that affect. During the December meeting there was not much time to talk about "low functioning" or underserved populations but again stressed that the Advisory Council and ODHH take the lead in addressing the needs of deaf individuals who fall in the category of "traditionally underserved" or low functioning populations. See attached memo from Howard Leonard regarding this issue.

Ben Dubin: We train our students, we train a workforce but we don't train our employers! We need to find a good skilled Job Developers to find work for some of these people.

Jennifer Whitcomb: Introduced herself as the new Executive Director for the Deaf Independent Living Association (DILA) with a brief explanation of her experience in lobbying and grant writing and requests that ODHH not forget about deaf and hard of hearing people living on the Eastern Shore.

Announcements

- ODHH Day (Extravaganza) for the fall 2006 - Yvonne Dunkle
- AADB Conference at Towson University, June 17-23, 2006 - Yvonne Dunkle
- NAD Conference and State Directors Meeting, June 27-July 3, 2006 - Yvonne Dunkle
- April 5 will have a workshop on customizing employment – Vanessa Antrum

Adjournment at 6:15 pm